

Towards a theory of motivation: describing commitment to the Māori language

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Motivations for learning heritage languages

second language acquisition (SLA) models:

- **Integrative** motivation (want to identify with group)
- **Instrumentive** motivation (academic, economic or social benefit)

Motivations

‘[SLA theories] fall short when examined in and applied to Native American contexts ... it is unmistakable that a new way of thinking about language revitalization is necessary’
(White 2006: 104)

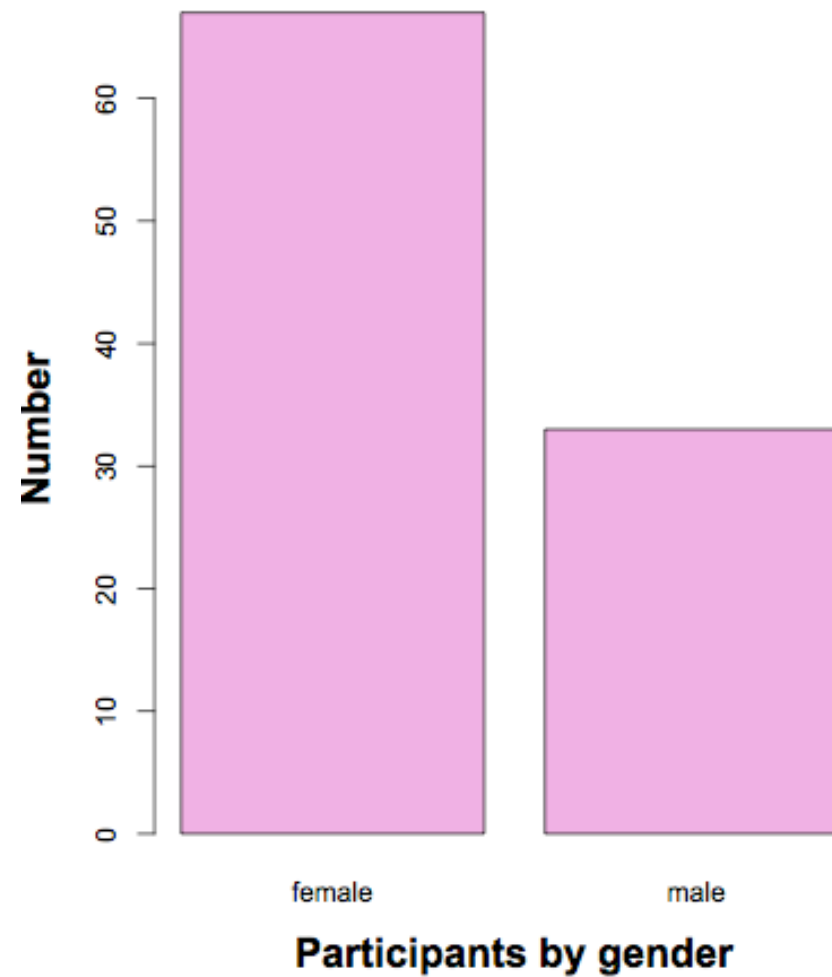
ILA motivation

- Indigenous Language Acquisition
- Second language adults
- Conscious decision

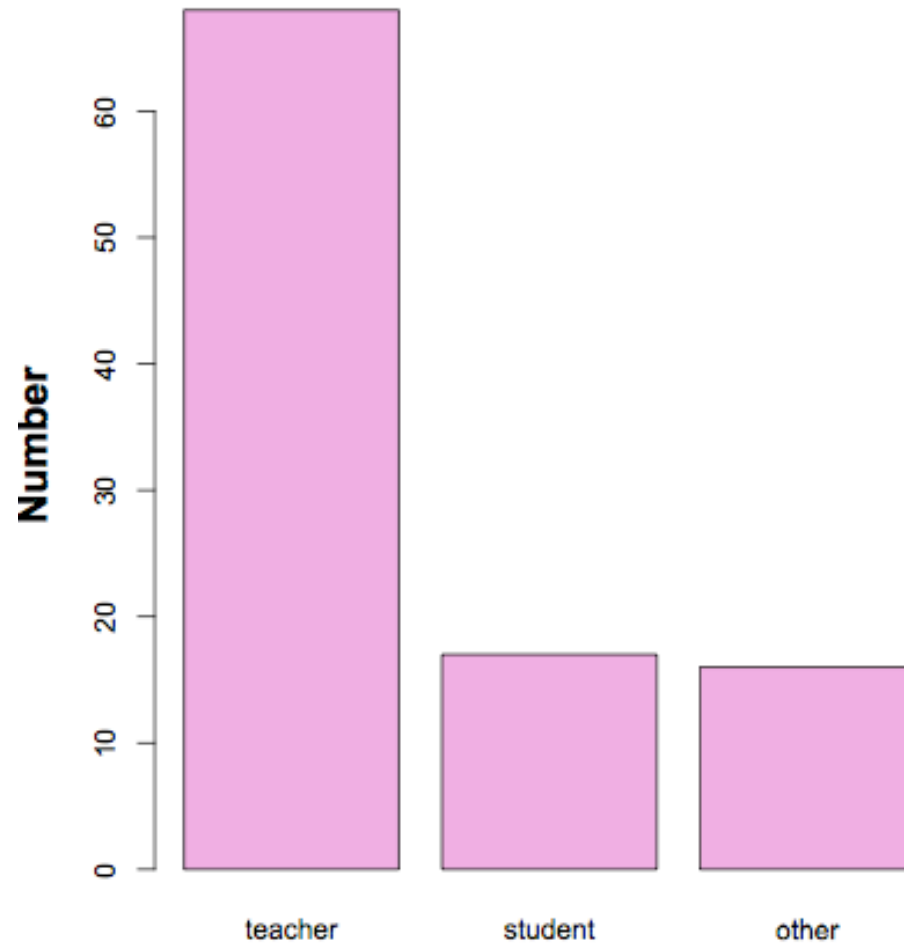
Present study

- Questionnaire
- Pilot study
- 104 respondents (9 are non-Maori)
- Questions about motivation
 - Self-generated
 - Ranking task
 - Opinion task
- Commitment index

Gender



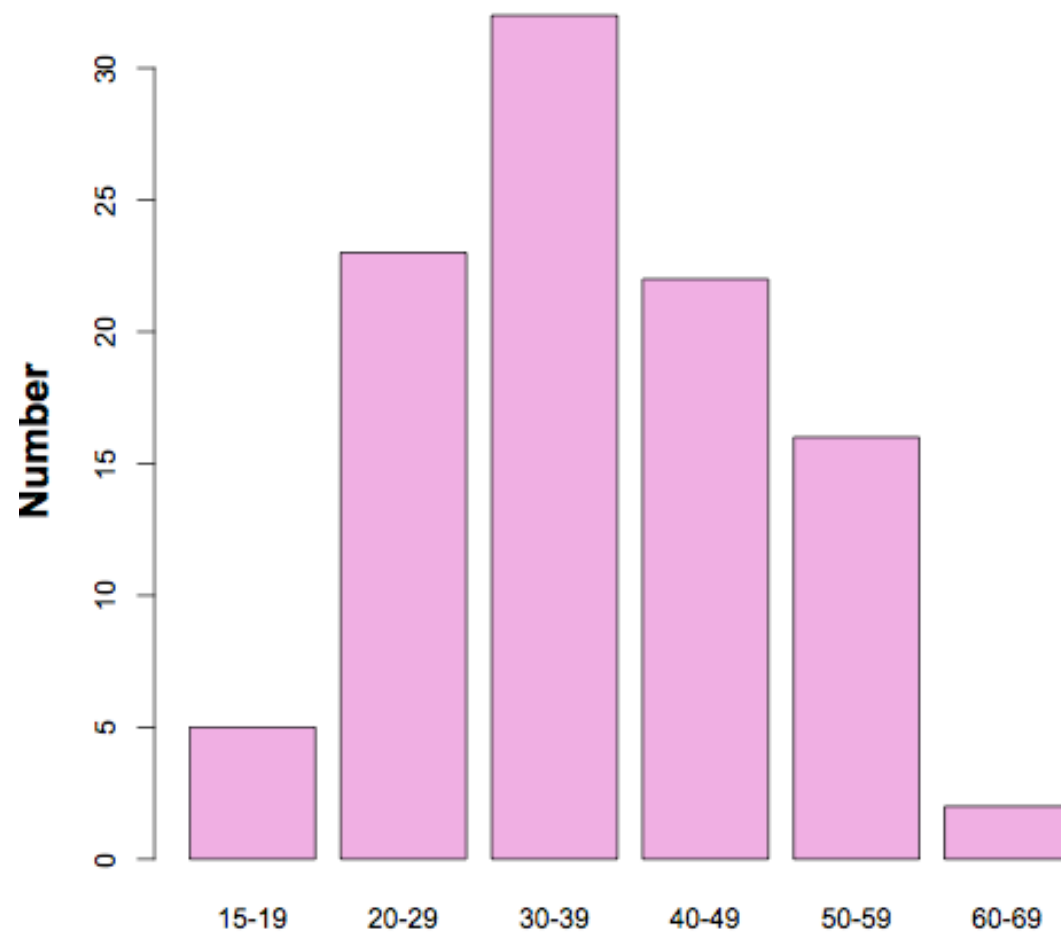
Occupation



Occupation

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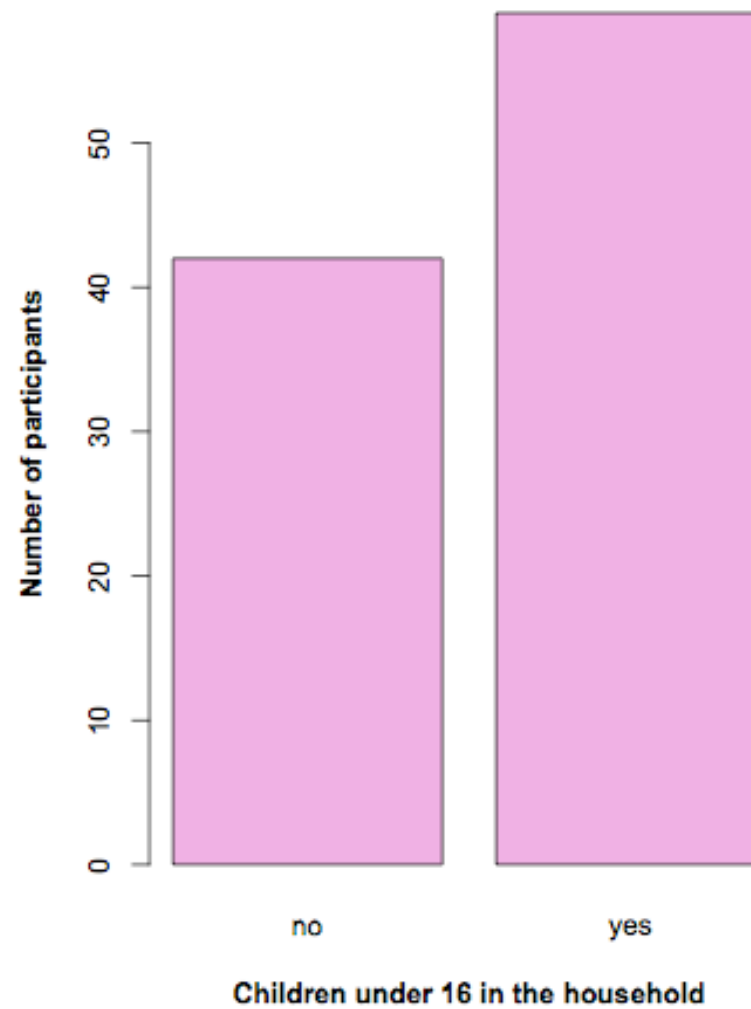
Age



Participants by age group

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Children



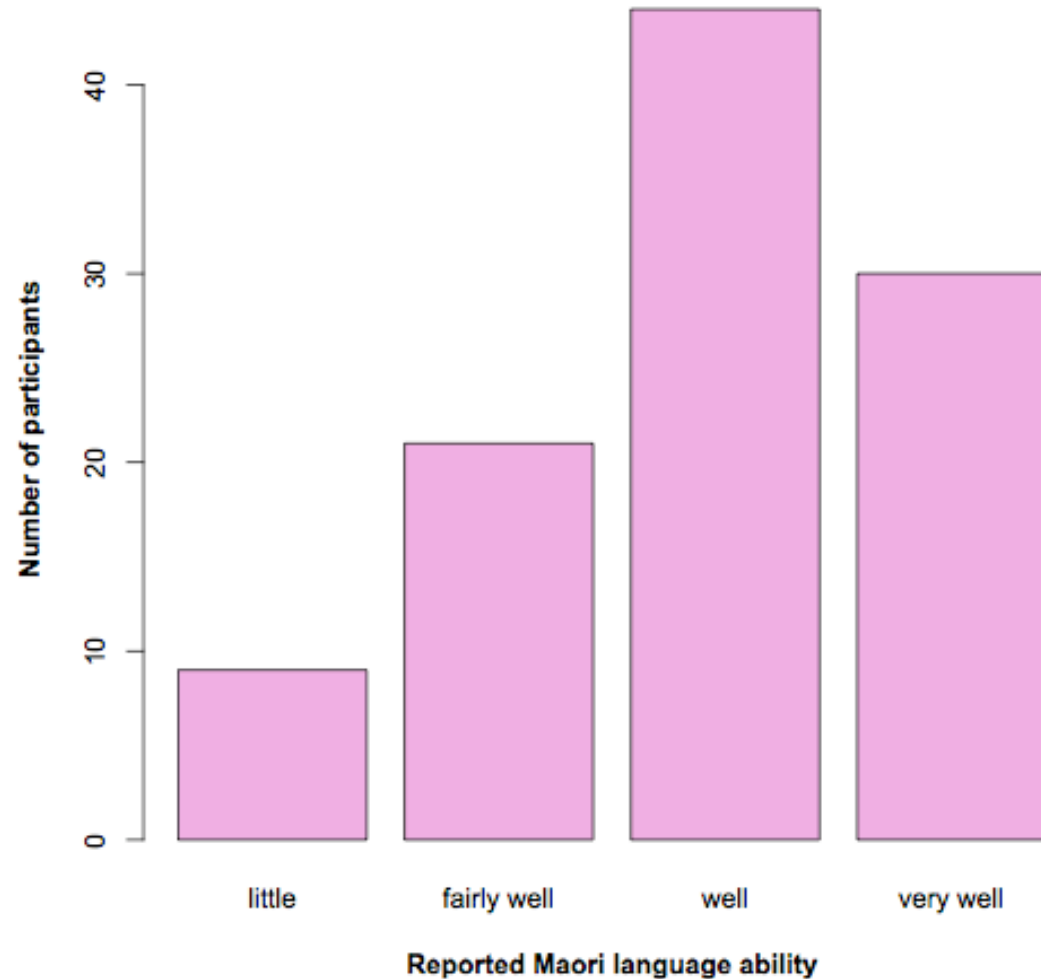
Language ability

Very well:

can talk naturally and confidently about any domestic and community subject with few grammatical mistakes

Well:

can talk about domestic and community subjects, occasionally struggles to convey an idea and may switch to English, occasional grammatical mistakes, but can be readily understood

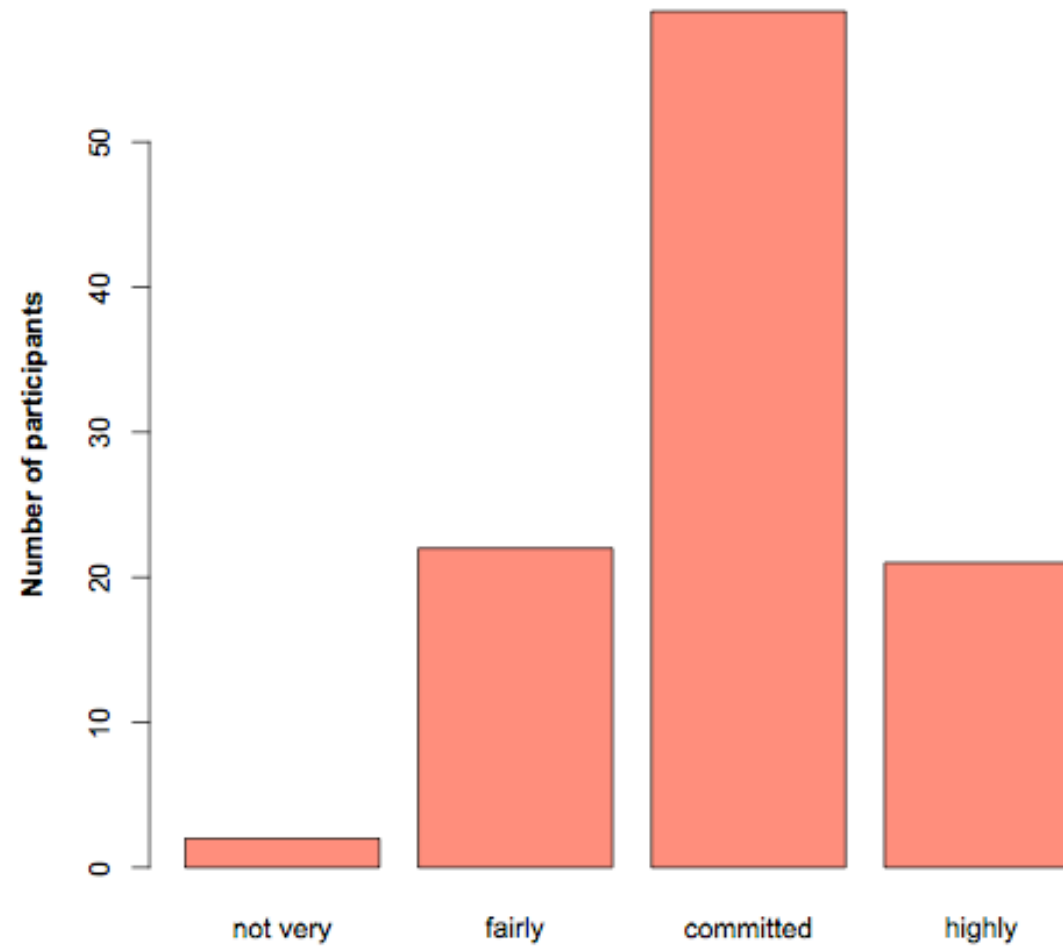


Commitment index (CI)

8 point scale:

- language ability / 2
- language use in home / 2
- language use outside of the home / 2
- commitment / 2

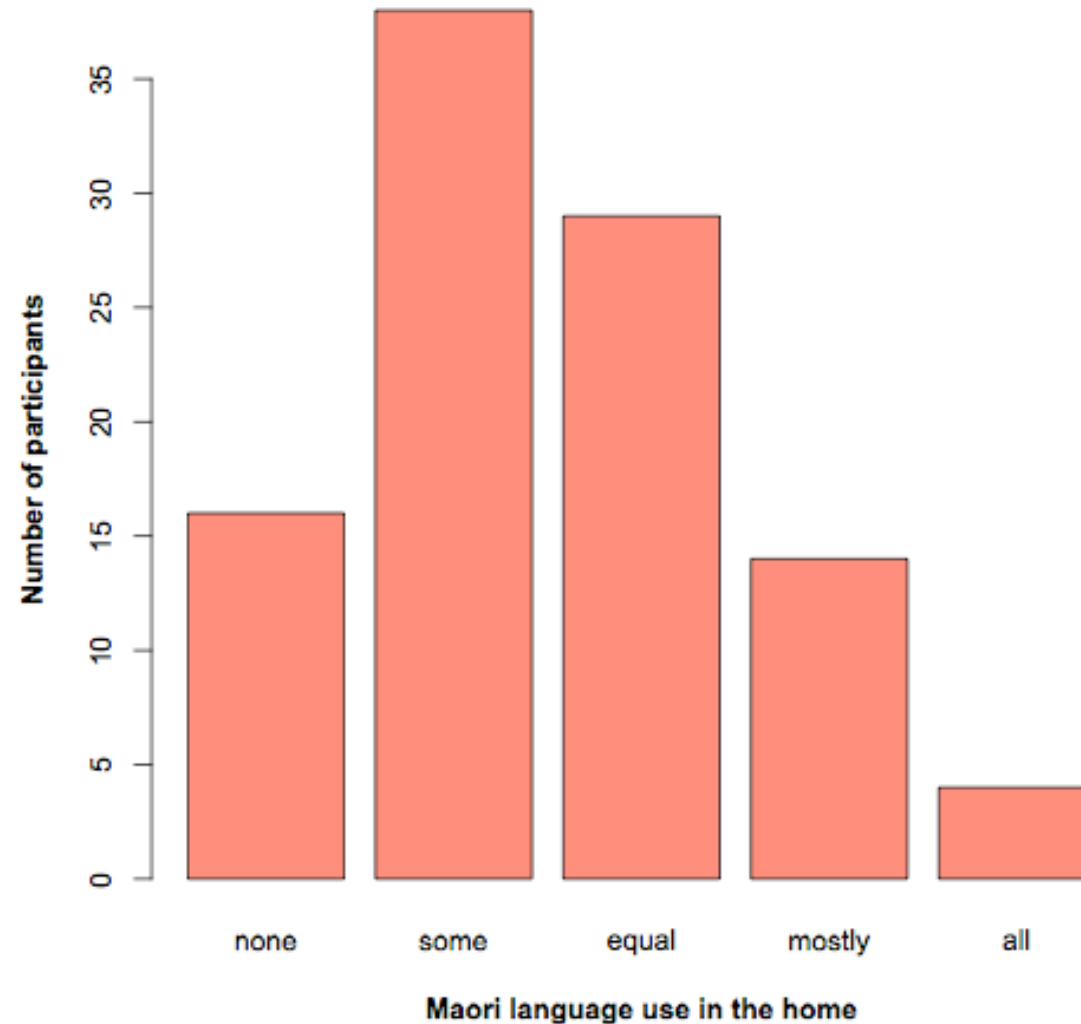
Commitment index (CI)



Commitment levels of participants

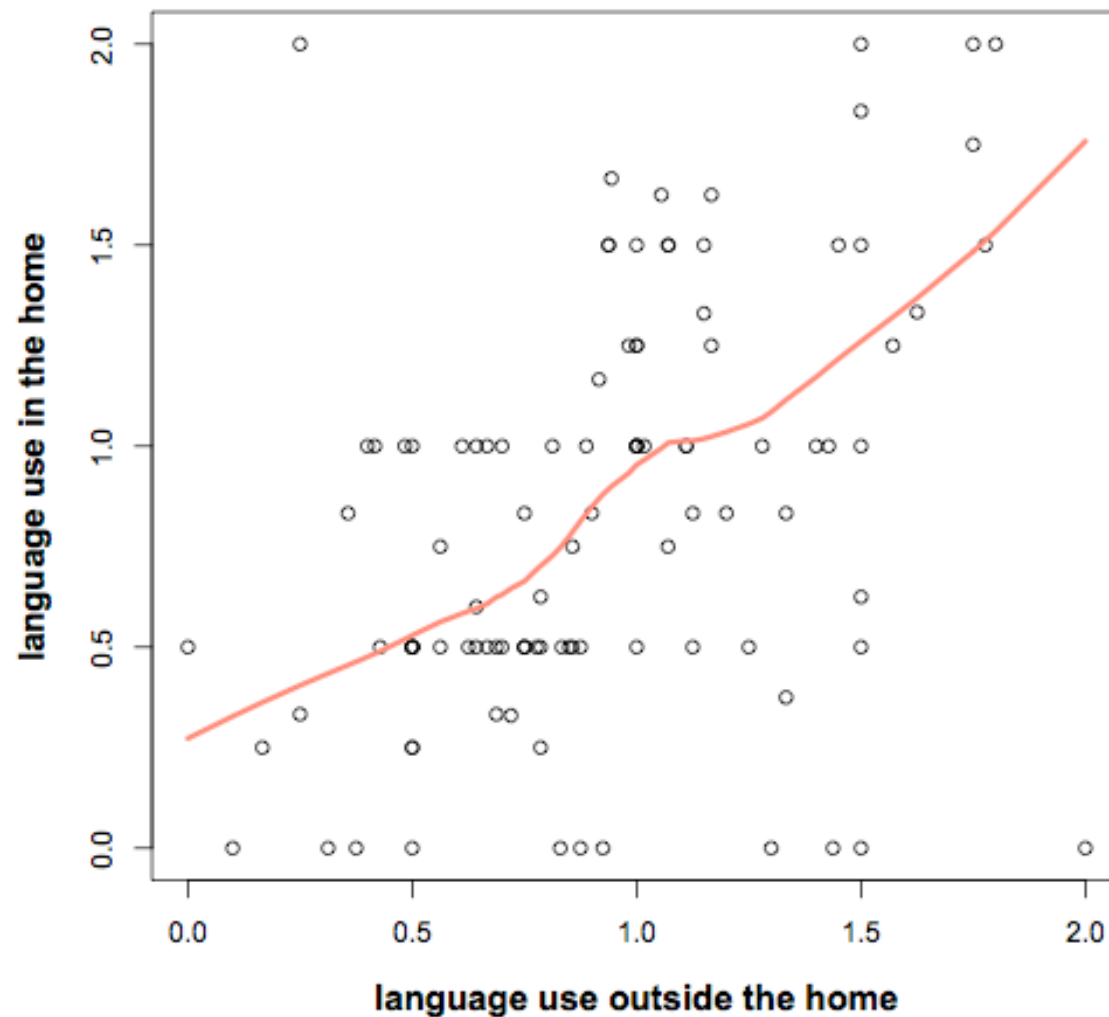
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Language use in the home



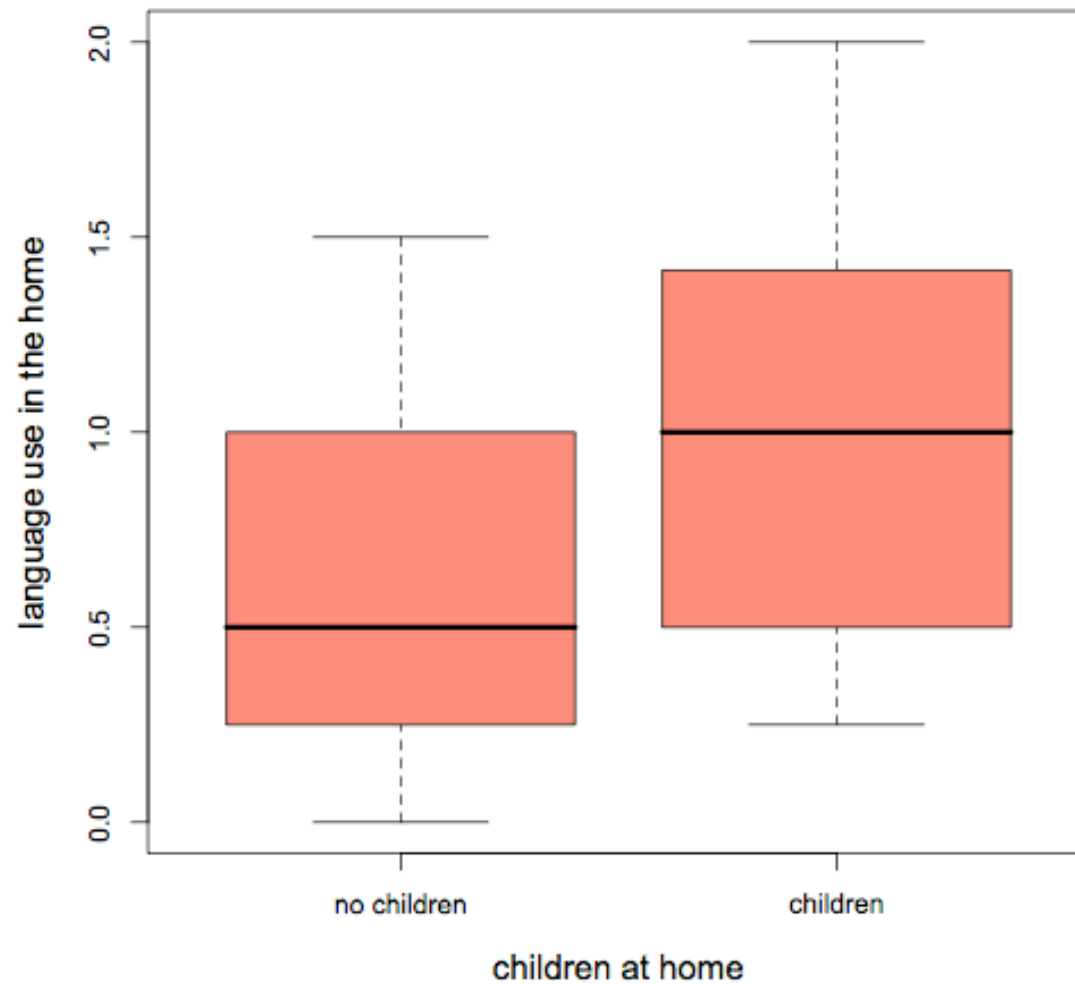
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Language use



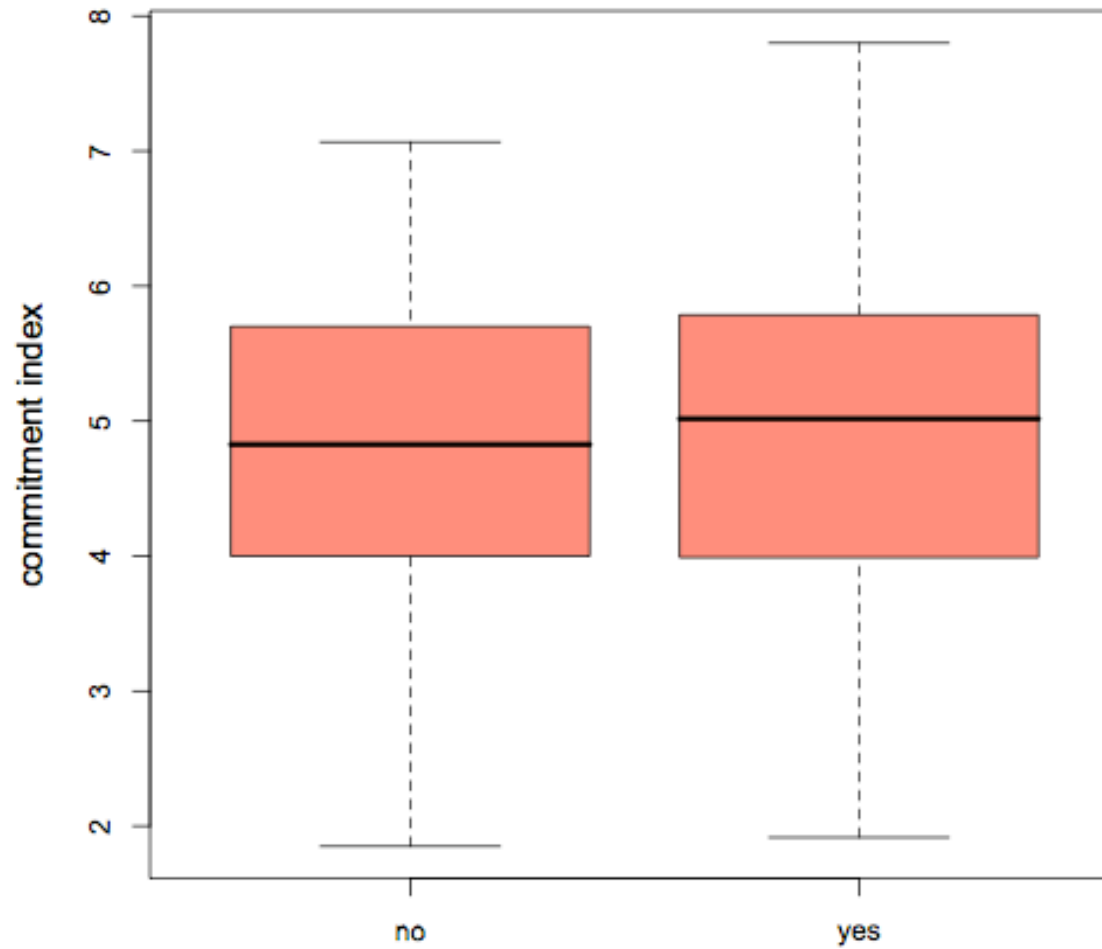
Spearman's $\rho = 0.4356218$
 $p < 0.001$

Language use in the home



Wilcoxon $p = 0.01087$

Children in the house



Children under 16 in the household

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Question 1

- List the three main reasons why you are committed to speaking the Māori language



Sample reasons given

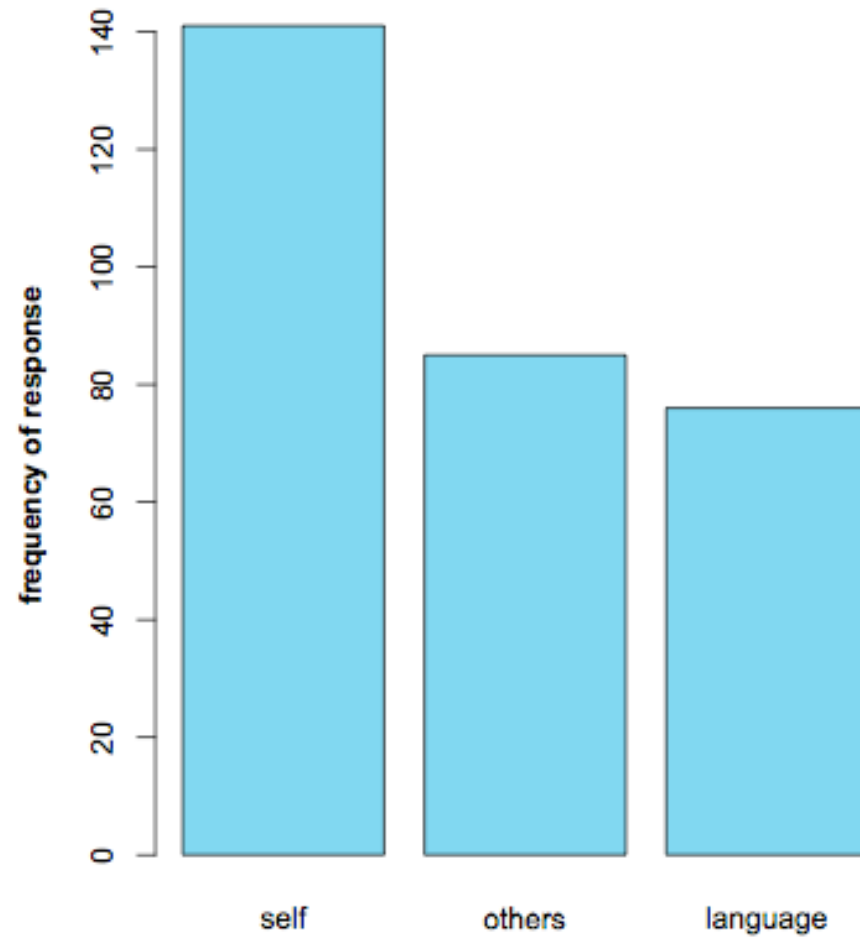
- To teach my children their language
- For the survival of te reo Maori
- For my own self identity
- So I can understand when I go to hui
- For the survival of my hapu and iwi
- To double my job opportunities
- For my own wellbeing
- The language is beautiful – it's a treasure
- To teach other people

Focus of commitment

towards:

- self (identity, work, wellbeing)
 - For my own self identity
 - To double my job opportunities
 - So I can understand when I go to hui
 - For my own wellbeing
- others (family, hapu, community)
 - To teach my children their language
 - For the survival of my hapu and iwi
- the language
 - For the survival of te reo Maori
 - The language is beautiful – it's a treasure

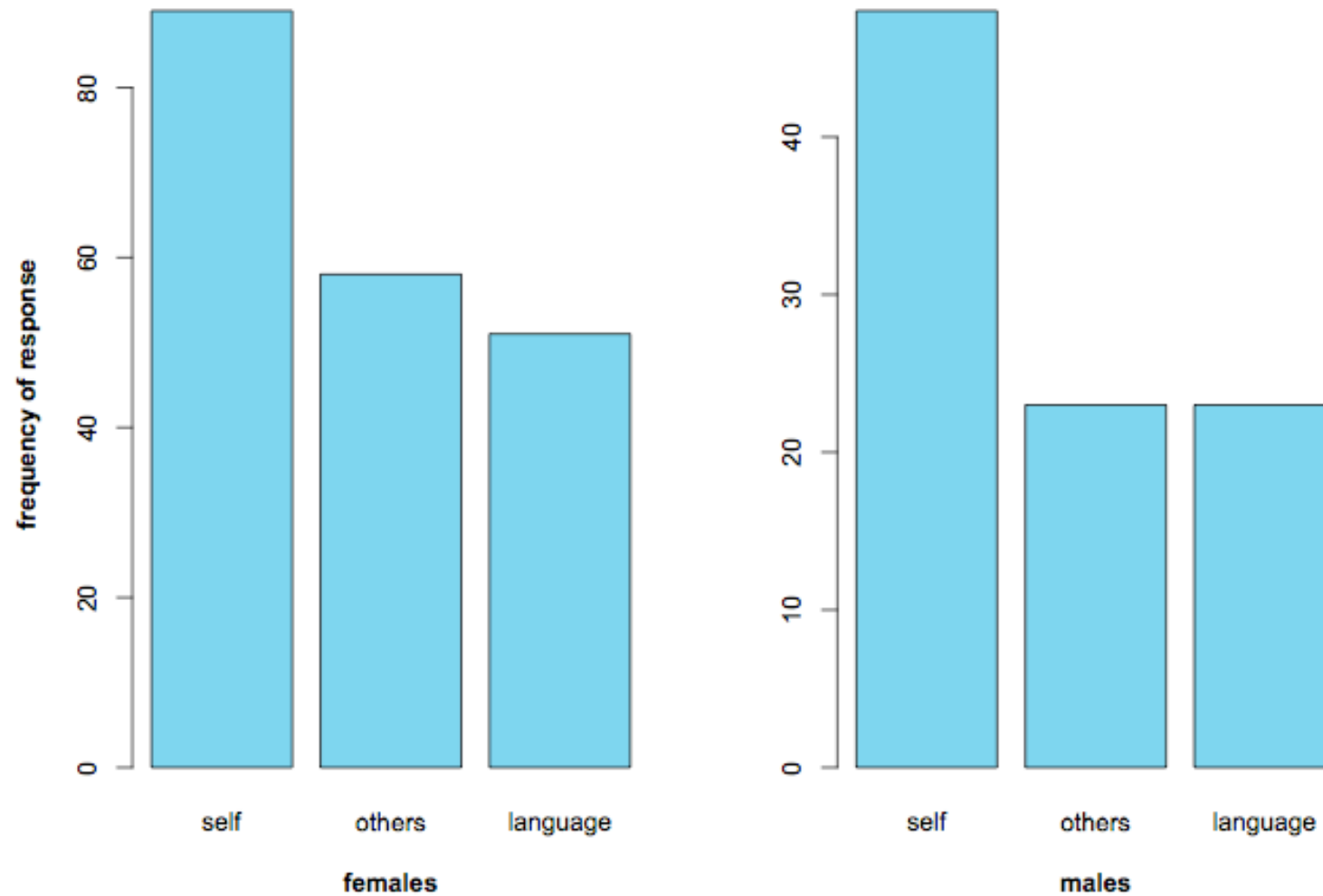
reported reasons – overall



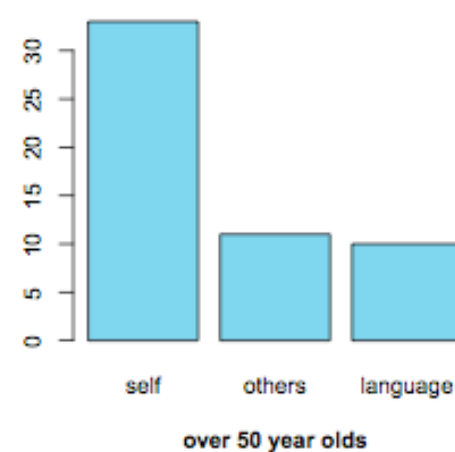
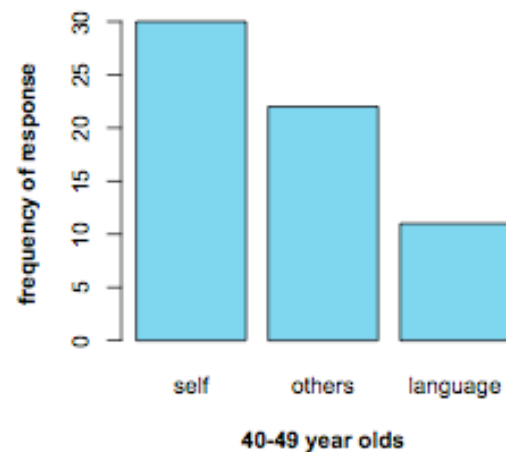
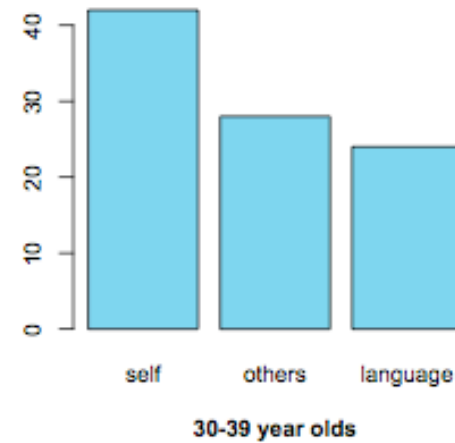
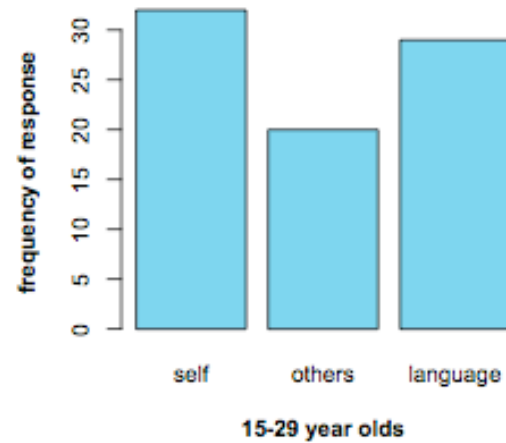
Focus of commitment

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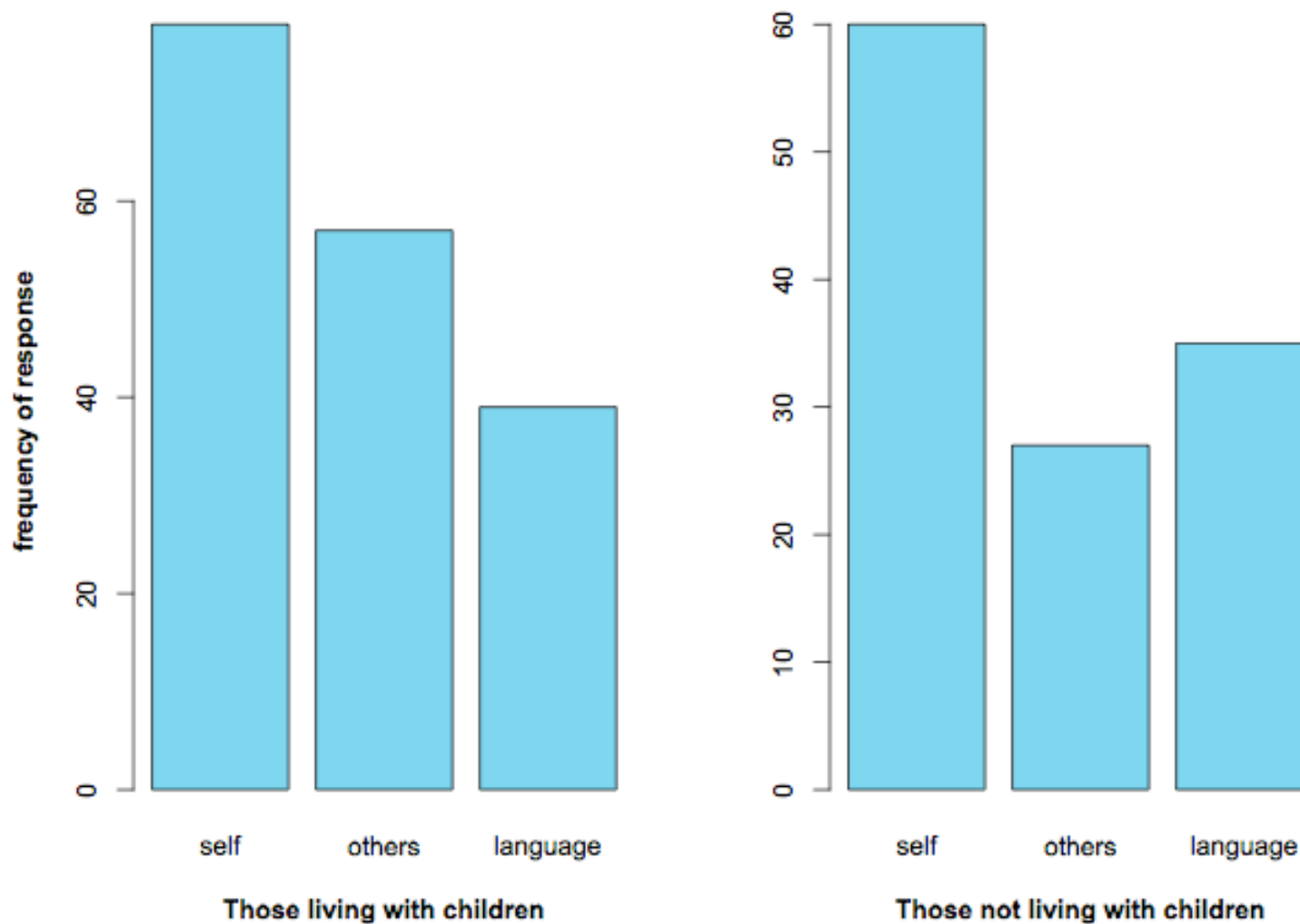
reported reasons – gender



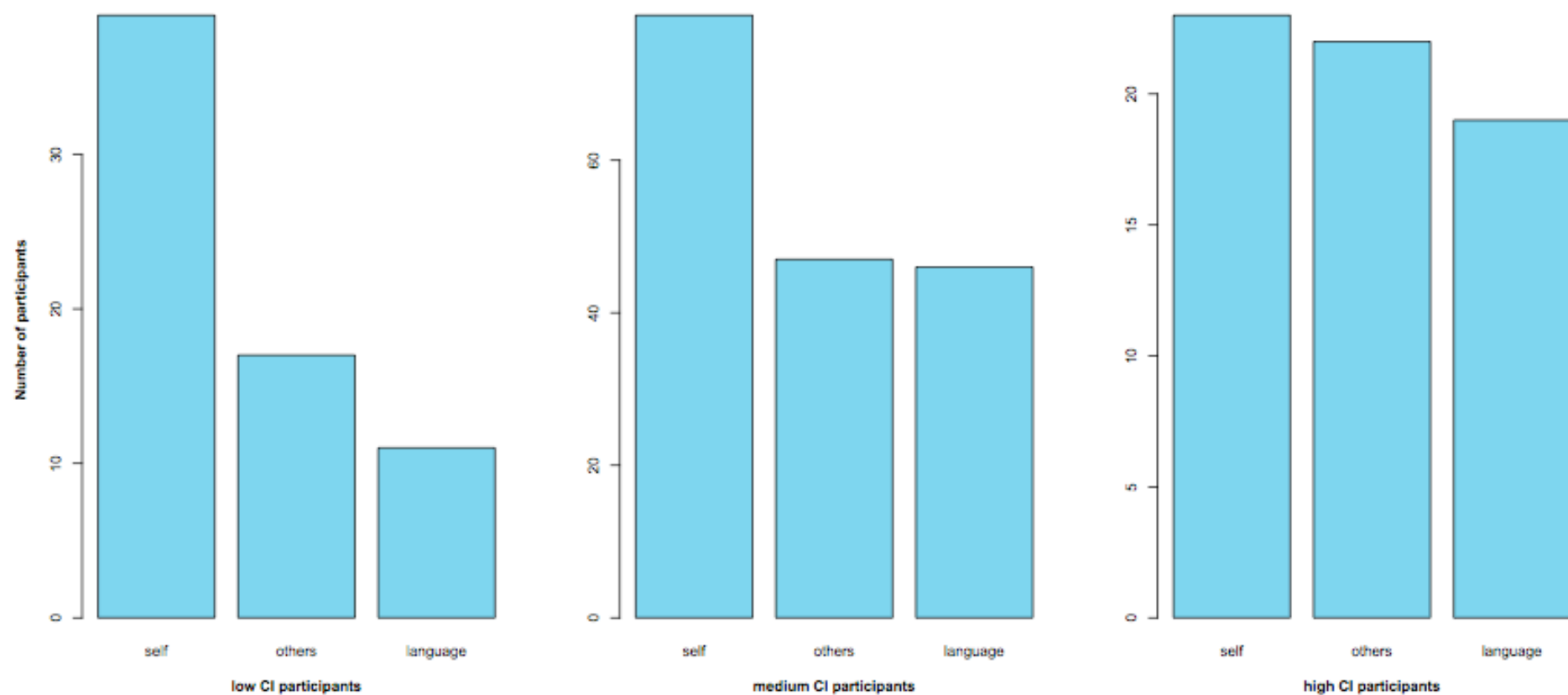
reported reasons – age



reported reasons – children



reported reasons – commitment index



Self-determination theory

Behaviour change will occur and persist if
autonomously motivated (Williams et al. 1996)

ILA motivation

Focus of commitment towards:

- self (identity, work, wellbeing)
- others (family, hapu, community)
- the language

ILA motivation

Responsibility towards the self is the most important motivator

- “I am Maori, so I want to speak Maori”
- work
- spiritual wellbeing (as per King 2009)

ILA motivation

Intergenerational role important – responsibility towards others:

- Passing language on to children from ancestors in a community context (as per Fishman 1991)

ILA motivation

Role in revitalising the language:

- don't want the language to die
- “the language is beautiful”
- but feeling part of a language revitalisation movement is not important (King, 2009)

ILA commitment

towards:

- self (identity, work, wellbeing)
- others (family, hapu, community, tipuna)
- the language

References

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- Earle, D. 2007. *He Tini Manu Reo: Learning te reo Māori through tertiary education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
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- White, F. (2006). Rethinking Native American language revitalization. *American Indian Quarterly*, 30(1&2), 91–109.
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